

Implementation Program

Overview

The Downtown Lincoln Master Plan provides a long-term blueprint for improving community livability and strengthening downtown Lincoln. The implementation plan prescribes a realistic and timely strategy for positive change.

It is important to seize the opportunity to honor the tremendous commitment, time and energy that citizens, business people and agency staff have devoted to the creation of this plan.

This implementation strategy is founded on the principle that public and private dollars must be spent over time to spark widespread and sustainable reinvestment in the downtown.



10th and Lincoln Mall Streetscape

Downtown Potential

ERA Projections

A long-term market analysis for downtown Lincoln prepared by Economics Research Associates (ERA) indicated the following additional demand for space over the next 20 years.

- Office: 2,200,000 SF
- Retail: 600,000 SF
- Residential: 2,000 units
- Hotel: 1,000 rooms

Development Capacity

A capacity analysis indicates that the ERA projections can be accommodated in the downtown. A long-term capacity analysis indicates that total development in the downtown could reach the levels shown below.

- Office: 4,900,000 SF
- Retail: 900,000 SF
- Residential: 2,800 units
- Hotel: Sites to be determined



Capacity Diagram

Catalyst Projects

Catalyst projects have the ability to:

- Stimulate new downtown development and private investment.
- Maintain and strengthen existing development.
- Draw significant numbers of people to the downtown.
- Improve the quality of life for downtown Lincoln residents.

These projects consist of strategically located streetscape improvements, mixed-use parking structures, existing building rehab/renovation and civic structures.

Priority Catalyst Projects

The highest priority must be given to projects that have the potential to revitalize the downtown investment environment. These projects are listed below:

A. Civic Square

B. Parking/Mixed-Use

C. Civic Square Office

(A, B, and C are a coordinated public/private civic square development)

D. P Street Infill Development -

YMCA, Wells Fargo, Runza Building

E. Arbor Day Foundation Mixed Use-Retail/Office

F. K Street Power Station Complex -
High Density Residential

(NOTE: K Street Power Station Complex is not visible on the plan below. It is located at the northwest corner of K and 9th Streets.)

G. West Haymarket

(NOTE: West Haymarket is not visible on the plan below. It is located on the west edge of the Haymarket Landmark District.)



Priority Catalyst Projects

Civic Square Development

With a coordinated approach in dealing with these outdated properties, their development potential could be maximized. Creation of a new public square and adjacent mixed-use development will require a coordinated effort by the City of Lincoln, Downtown Lincoln Association, property owners, and business owners. Benefits of developing this project include:

- Establishment of early momentum – a signal that the public is dedicated to implementing the Downtown Master Plan.
- Integrating successful retail establishments such as Chipotle and Coldstone into the design concept.
- Redevelopment of underutilized parcels.
- Strategically locating a new parking structure to effectively serve retail and office employees.
- Providing new ground floor retail and restaurant space to activate 13th Street along the square and P Street.
- New office development – addition of a significant amount of new Class A tenant space.
- Possible new hotel and residential development – new residents will animate downtown and provide existing businesses new customers.



Redevelopment of Douglas 3 and Twin Cinemas



Integrated Into Square



Redevelopment of Starship Theater

A Civic Square

Design of the square would include the following:

- Special brick or concrete pavers throughout.
- Curbless design to expand the usable space and perceived visual dimensions of the assembly area.
- Possible expansion of the primary assembly area for special events by temporary closure to auto traffic on the adjacent half-block of 13th Street.
- Visual and pedestrian linkages north-south from O Street to the P Street retail core and beyond to the UNL Campus.
- Possible office parking to be provided below-grade at the square.



Civic Square



Civic Square

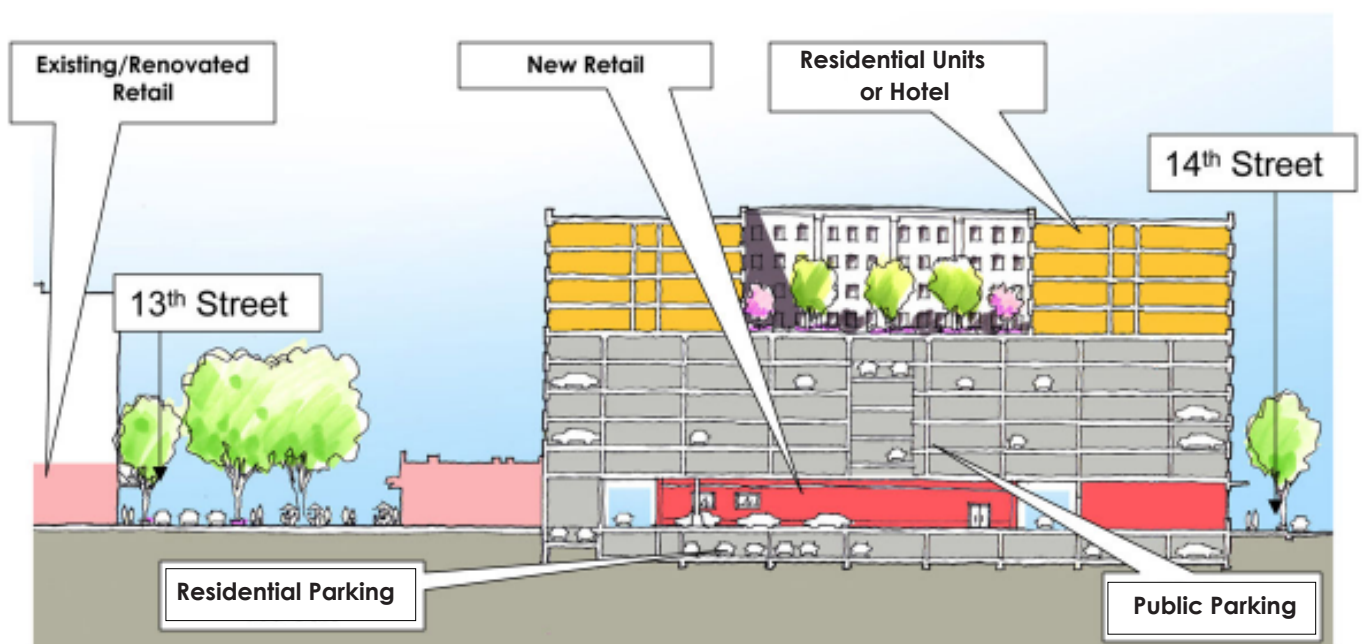
B Parking/Mixed Use

This parking/mixed use project could include:

- Public parking structure for 400 cars
- 15,000 SF of new retail
- 80 residential units or hotel
- 100 residential parking spaces underground



Parking/Mixed Use



Section X - X - Looking North

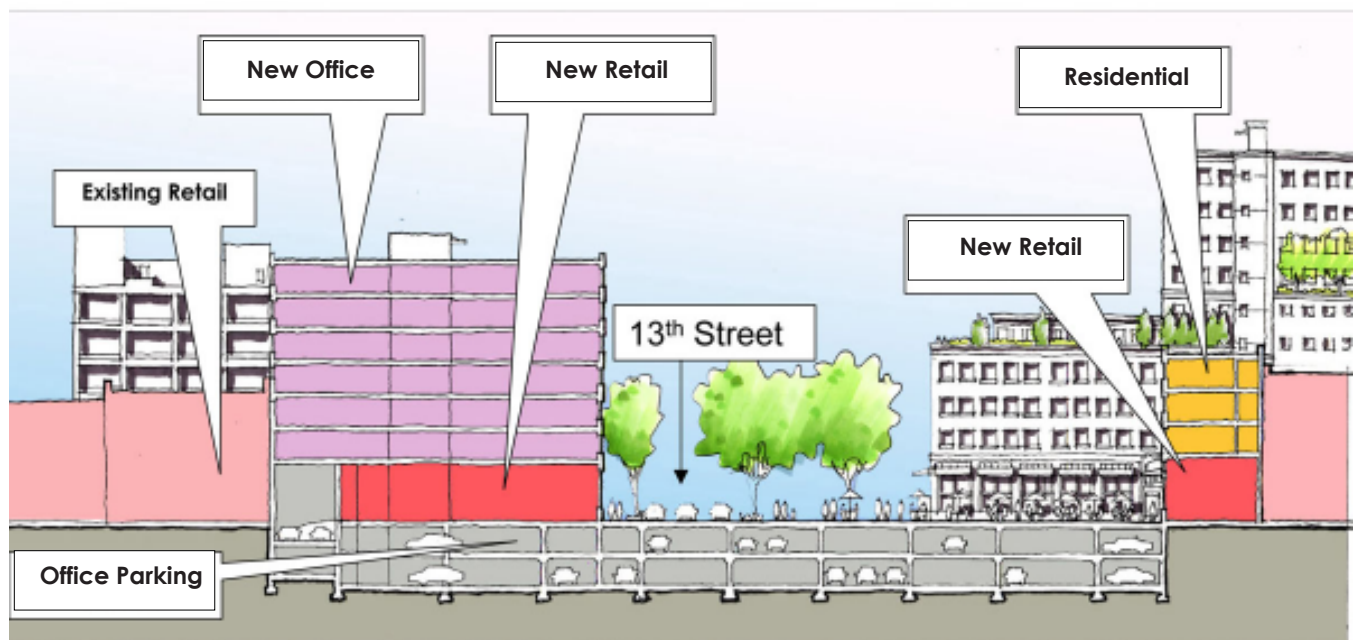
C Civic Square Office

This Civic Square office project would include:

- 100,000 SF of new office
- 5,000 SF of new retail
- Office parking for 180 cars underground



Civic Square Office



Section Y - Y - Looking North

D P Street Infill Development

P Street should be the center for retail activity in the downtown. A pedestrian friendly connection between Civic Square and the Haymarket is essential.

P Street Infill Development

Renovation or redevelopment of strategically located buildings can strengthen the retail “fabric” along P Street. These projects would include:

- *Runza Building*— Located at the eastern end of the primary retail street, redevelopment of the ground floor should include a pedestrian-friendly corner entry and storefront improvements that activate the street edge.
- *YMCA Building*— Ground-floor reuse of this historic building can provide opportunities for new local, specialty or similar retail uses.
- *Wells-Fargo Lobby Renovation*— Renovation and reuse of the underutilized northern portion of this space could be sensitively adapted for upscale retailers. Home furnishing uses such as Crate & Barrel or Williams-Sonoma would be appropriate here.



P Street Demonstration Project and Infill Development

E Arbor Day Foundation Building

A mixed-use office and retail renovation and expansion of the Arbor Day Foundation offices includes:

- Existing office renovation and expansion.
- Ground floor retail development of former Plaza Four theater auditorium.
- Green roof development serving as a model for sustainable practices for other reuse, renovation, or new construction projects in downtown.



Arbor Day Foundation Building



Priority Catalyst Project - E

F K Street Power Station Complex

A high-density residential development project for the K Street Power Station Complex provides an opportunity for establishing market-rate housing in South Haymarket. The reuse of this records storage facility would include:

- Relocation of storage facility to a site that meets city, county and state agencies' siting and building needs.
- 70 condominium units.



K Street Power Station Complex



Priority Catalyst Project - F

G West Haymarket

Redevelopment of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railyards and existing post office site will be a catalyst for new development in Haymarket and the P Street corridor. New development should be compatible with and complement the Haymarket District in terms of form and materials.

*West Haymarket Plan*

Responsibilities

Implementation of this plan will require focused, aggressive efforts by the public and private sectors over the coming years. For this plan to be successful, a comprehensive, consistent and coordinated effort will be necessary.

Managing Implementation

The key entities below will be responsible for the following:

City of Lincoln

- Needs to develop an interdepartmental implementation team to coordinate public sector efforts.
- Develops and implements Urban Redevelopment activities, such as attracting developers, assisting in site assembly, and reviewing and approving development plans.
- Constructs public infrastructure and amenities.
- Provides public parking in the downtown to relieve existing demand or as an incentive to induce private development.
- Administers loan and grant programs contributing to downtown revitalization.
- Participates in retail recruitment, outreach and marketing programs.

Downtown Lincoln Association in partnership with Lincoln Chamber of Commerce/Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development

The Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA) will be downtown' independent and self-sustaining champion, providing leadership for private sector interests and strengthening its ongoing public/private partnership with the City of Lincoln. Similar to other successful downtowns in the nation, the DLA provides comprehensive marketing, maintenance and management services focused solely on

advancing the evolution of downtown. DLA has become one of the most dynamic downtown organizations for any mid-sized American city, a role that must be supported and continued into the future.

- Provides an education curriculum for downtown businesses in the areas of advertising, customer service, marketing and visual merchandising.
- Provides information on available small business loan and grant programs.
- Develops information on the downtown area, including specific information on retail buildings and spaces.
- Creates an effective leasing brochure for the downtown.
- Participates in retail and office recruitment outreach and marketing programs.
- Explore the development of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to assist in the redevelopment process.

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

- Participates in a joint design plan study for the Promenade along R Street.
- Participates in a study for Downtown Arena in West Haymarket.
- Participates in 12th Street Arts Corridor Design and Development.

Property Owners and Business Owners

- Focus on building renovations and tenant upgrades by taking advantage of available loan and grant programs.
- Continue to support the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan.
- Provide the information required to create an effective leasing brochure for the downtown.
- Participate in retail and office recruitment outreach and marketing programs.

Other Implementors

- Local and National Foundations.
- Lincoln Electric System.
- Other Governmental Entities.

Policies, Regulations and Guidelines

The City of Lincoln will be responsible for carrying out any relevant changes to policies, regulations and community guidelines.

Master plan recommendations generally comply with existing plans, policies and regulations. Where recommendations do not comply, changes to the existing policies and regulations will be made to be consistent with the Master Plan.

Plan Adoption

The Downtown Master Plan should be adopted as a subarea plan, or other policy-guiding city plan. It should be incorporated into the City-County Comprehensive Plan.

Development Review

To ensure that the policies of the Downtown Master Plan are implemented as envisioned by the community, additional updates or creation of new regulatory and discretionary review documents are needed. These include:

- Development and adoption of essential design standards and permitted uses. These should be highly graphic maps that describe street edge conditions and ground floor uses for *only* those critical areas in the downtown where the form of development must be very prescriptive.
- The Design Guidelines and the Design Review Process should be adopted as the *primary* tool for review of downtown buildings and public areas. A new structured process and review committee should be determined.

This process may involve a new committee or may incorporate the range of existing review bodies such as the Urban Design Committee, the Capitol Environs Commission, and Historic Preservation Commission. The new committee could provide recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council, using the Design Guidelines as an exclusive evaluation tool. Thresholds are described within the Design Guidelines.

Public Area Requirements

Design standards and details should be codified for the entire downtown to ensure unified and consistent development of streets, sidewalks, intersections and public spaces. While these standards must address roadway safety requirements for automobiles and trucks, they should be developed with an emphasis on the pedestrian and bicycle.

Possible Funding Sources

Downtown revitalization is a multi-year task, and success is enhanced by a multi-year commitment of funding and incentive programs. There are many financing tools which will be available to downtown Lincoln to implement the projects identified in the Downtown Lincoln Master Plan. Some of these are described below.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

This tool is primarily designed to finance public costs associated with a private development project. In Nebraska it was first instituted as "Community Improvement Financing" in 1978, and has been used with much success in Lincoln. In the consultant team's experience, it is the most effective tool in revitalizing downtowns nationwide.

Where it has been successful, TIF programs have designated an urban redevelopment area or "district" in which the taxes are set at a baseline amount above which any future tax increases (generated in the district) are used to support project implementation.

Typically, tax increment bonds are sold against the anticipated flow of this future tax "increment" – the portion above the set baseline that is generated in the "TIF District."

Business Improvement Districts

Downtown Lincoln benefits from business improvement districts that provide reliable and consistent funding for downtown marketing, maintenance and management activities. The continuation of the BIDs is critical to the ongoing success of the downtown. It is the policy of the City of Lincoln to support the continuation of Downtown Lincoln's BIDs as an integral long-term implementation tool for the Lincoln Downtown Master Plan.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Federally-funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development this grant program primarily has targeted affordable housing. It is one of the oldest economic development tools, but its use is diminishing because of recent funding cuts by the Bush administration.

New Market Tax Credit Program (NMTC)

This recent federal program is intended to attract private-sector investment into qualifying low-income communities to help finance community development projects, stimulate economic opportunity and create jobs. The program offers federal tax credits for making private investments in qualified Community Development Entities (CDEs).

These entities are formed specifically to receive and administer the funds. For instance, in Portland, the Portland Family of Funds was created. Acting essentially as a bank, it has helped finance such downtown projects as the reuse of the historic Armory Building into a regional theater complex, and the renovation of the historic Telegram Building.

Since 2003 approximately \$6 billion in federal tax credits have been awarded to some 60 organizations nationwide.

Transportation Enhancements Act (TEA-21)

A federal transportation program which has been creatively used to construct transportation projects; for instance, may be applicable to Amtrak facilities and West Haymarket area improvements in Lincoln.

Special Assessment/Taxing Districts

Like TIF programs, a privately-oriented

leveraged debt program to focus incentives in a "self-funded" project area. For instance, in Portland, Oregon, a non-profit organization, Portland Streetcar, Inc. formed to construct and operate the downtown streetcar; it was funded in large part by designating adjacent properties to an "assessment district" to contribute funds.

Downtown Development Incentives Fund

Philanthropic support providing a significant amount of funds over a sufficiently long period of time to capitalize financing for private investment through such means as:

- **Revolving loan fund** offering interest rate write downs .
- **Matching funds** for contributions to downtown projects.
- **Direct incentives for targeted retailers** - would provide a "negotiation fund" for target retailers or categories.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

Federal tax credits program created in 1986 under Section 42 of the IRS code to encourage the development of affordable multifamily rental housing. For example, in April 2005, a Racine, Wisconsin downtown housing development project identified in the recent Racine downtown master plan was awarded \$7.5 million of these "section 42" tax credits, through the state's Housing and Economic Development Authority.

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits for Certified Historic Structures

Federal program in which a portion of the renovation investment in an historic building is credited back against federal income taxes, in exchange for certain federal (Department of Interior) renovation standards being followed.

Other Lincoln Incentive Funding Types

Another method that may be available to Lincoln for implementation of projects is to structure a range of public and private incentives for downtown retail development. These “indirect funding” mechanisms might typically include:

- **Granting bonus densities** under the zoning code in exchange for provision of a public amenity.
- **Provision of structured parking spaces.**
- **Special permitting for uses** such as sidewalk cafes to animate street life.
- **Allowing sponsorships** of public space programming to encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Below-market-rate land sales or ground leases.**
- **Below-market-rate public bond financing** to reduce the cost of capital for designated development projects.

designation offering enhanced incentives for firms locating within certain boundaries; includes a 16 square mile area in Omaha.

- *Lodging Tax.*
- *General Funds.*
- *Sales Tax Increment.*
- *Historic Preservation Tax Deferral Program (State of Nebraska)*
- *Community Development Tax.*

Local, State, and Federal Funding Types

There are other common financing tools used nationwide and/or in Lincoln which should be considered as well, and their use either continued or expanded. These others include:

- *State Highway Funds.*
- *Commercial Facade Grant Program.*
- *County or City Economic Development Corporation.*
- *Initiative for Renewal Communities and Empowerment Zones* - a federal program (through HUD) which designates special investment areas nationally; currently Lincoln is not designated, however.
- *Enterprise Zones* - State of Nebraska